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USSR-Berlin: Soviet letters of 14 February to the Big Three were designed primarily to create friction among the Western Allies.

The letters to the US and UK contained much the same complaints that Moscow made [] to Bonn last month, alleging that Bonn was trying to lay claim to West Berlin. The two powers were asked to protect the special status of the city from West German "pretensions." The letter to the French, however, consisted of a single sentence noting Franco-Soviet interest in European detente and stating merely that the US and UK had been sent letters about dangerous West German activities in Berlin.

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In addition to encouraging differences among the Big Three on how to deal with Bonn on such matters, Moscow probably is trying to foment friction between the Allies and Bonn. The Soviets may expect the Allies to caution Bonn against obvious demonstrations of its links with Berlin in order to avoid provoking a stronger Communist response.

A few days before the letters were sent, Soviet Ambassador Abrasimov in East Berlin asked to see the US ambassador before the end of the month. He also sought a meeting with the French ambassador. Abrasimov probably hopes to get Bonn to play down the Bundestag committee meetings which it has scheduled in Berlin early next month and which are sure to raise hackles in East Germany. []

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Brazil: Discontented military officers hope to force radical changes in the Costa e Silva administration this month.

Much of the army's uneasiness stems from its belief that its image has been tarnished through corruption, inefficiency, and policy failures by the present regime. Many military men, particularly field-grade officers, believe that even though their plan to force action is risky, such a move is preferable to admitting that the army has failed to govern well. Further, they fear that inaction would risk letting power fall into the hands of corrupt politicians.

These restive groups are not likely to have developed a full consensus or a firm course of action. In their entirety the demands they have made are undoubtedly too strong for Costa e Silva to accept. These groups probably do not have enough support to present an ultimatum. Costa e Silva probably will have to make some political adjustments, but he should be able to work out at least a short-term accommodation that will not jeopardize his personal position.

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NOTE

Belgium: King Baudouin has appointed a former prime minister, Paul Segers, to appraise the situation and help resolve the government crisis. Segers will poll political leaders and recommend either further efforts to form a cabinet or dissolution of parliament and new elections. If elections are held in the present highly charged atmosphere, extremists on both sides of the linguistic issue are likely to profit, thereby deepening the rift between the two communities.

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